

and the nation at-large, that police misconduct is an issue that we must address in a bipartisan manner. The energies of Congress should be focused on the adoption of legislative priorities that address the substance of law enforcement management and strengthen the current battery of tools available to sanction misconduct.

As a Congress we have been enthusiastic about supporting programs designed to get officers on the street. We must be just as willing to support programs designed to train and manage them after they get there. The current national climate requires decisive action to implement solutions. This legislation initiates the reforms necessary to restore public trust and accountability to law enforcement.

IMPORTANCE OF THE CENSUS TO  
RURAL AMERICA

**HON. ROBERT W. NEY**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 15, 2000*

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, as you know, this week, 112 Members of Congress, along with members of Leadership from both sides of the aisle, officially kicked off the start of the Congressional Rural Caucus. Over the last days, a series of events was held to promote this renewed bipartisan effort that will help raise awareness of the concerns and issues facing rural America.

There are, of course, a number of issues that affect those who live in rural areas, but in reality, one event in particular can and will have long-lasting implications for rural America.

I'm talking about April 1, 2000, better known as Census Day.

Unfortunately, a number of Americans, whether they live in urban or rural communities, are still unaware of the importance of the decennial census. This is evident in the number of people, around 30 to 40 percent, who do not respond to a Census questionnaire.

But, I'd like to remind everyone that the outcome of the decennial census has the potential to change the face of rural America, both politically and socially.

Before I outline the potential outcomes let me first define what is rural America:

Rural and small town America is home to approximately one-third of the total US population, or about 82 million residents. This is equal to the percentage of Americans who live in urban centers.

Of the nation's 39,000 local governments, 86 percent serve populations under 10,000, and half have fewer than 1,000 residents. These communities cover at least 80 percent of the nation's land.

While farming remains a driving force in many rural communities, it no longer completely dominates the rural economy. The service and manufacturing sectors account for 22 percent and 17 percent respectively of rural employment, compared to 8 percent for agriculture.

And, many will be surprised to know that overall, Pennsylvania, Texas, North Carolina,

Ohio and New York have the largest rural populations, with Michigan, Georgia, California, Indiana and Florida close behind.

Now, why is the census important to rural America?

First, the Constitution requires the federal government to conduct a census every ten years to help apportion the 435 seats of the House of Representatives among the states. So, states that have a large undercount are at risk of losing political representation in Congress.

Second, billions of dollars in federal aid to states and local governments are allocated using census data. In 2000, almost \$200 billion in federal aid will be distributed through 20 federal programs that range from agriculture to community development to education to health.

According to the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), rural communities are at risk of losing \$2,500 each year in federal and state aid for each person that is undercounted. That adds up to a significant amount of lost revenue for rural communities over a ten year period, especially when you consider the numbers.

In 1990, the census missed 5.9 percent of rural renters, compared with 4.2 percent of urban renters. The Census Bureau also estimates it missed about 1.2 percent of all rural residents, which is about three-quarters of a million people.

Let me put this into perspective. There are six states, plus the District of Columbia, that have populations below 750,000. So, the rural undercount is equivalent to misplacing Alaska, Delaware, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, or Wyoming.

Third, accurate census data is essential for local decision makers, whether economic development planners, school board members or business leaders. The more data rural communities have at their disposal, the better prepared they will be to serve their citizens in terms of municipal services and programs. It is also an essential ingredient in developing strategic plans aimed at attracting new businesses and industries.

With so much at risk, it is vital that we all work together to ensure that rural Americans are counted. This is not a partisan issue, but a rural issue. Stand up and be counted Rural America!

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 15, 2000*

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 46 and 47, I was away on official business. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on each.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. ADAM SMITH**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 15, 2000*

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, March 9, I had to fly home for my wife's ultrasound and missed several votes.

On House vote 42 on H.R. 3846 (Minimum Wage/Question of Continued Consideration) I would have voted "yes."

On House vote 43 on H.R. 3846 (Minimum Wage/Two-Year Increase) I would have voted "yes."

On House vote 44 on H.R. 3846 (Minimum Wage/Recommit) I would have voted "yes."

On House vote 45 (Minimum Wage/Passage) I would have voted "yes."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. LYNN N. RIVERS**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 15, 2000*

Ms. RIVERS. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall vote 41—H.R. 3081, I inadvertently voted "yes." It was my intention to vote "no" on rollcall vote 41—H.R. 3081.

HOPE FOR SYRIA

**HON. BILL MCCOLLUM**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 15, 2000*

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, since its establishment, Israel has been fighting and striving for genuine and lasting peace with its neighbors so that it can concentrate on making the desert bloom, and, more recently, on developing one of the world's leading centers of high-tech industries. Israel is the United States' closest ally in the region, and the bulwark of furthering U.S. interests in the region. Little wonder that virtually the entire political spectrum in Washington is committed to supporting Israel's quest for peace and security.

However, despite this American commitment, the Middle East is in the midst of a crisis emanating from the latest developments in the Peace Process advocated by the Clinton Administration. The flagrant absurdity of this latest turn of events is an accurate manifestation of the Administration's overall policy. For nearly twenty years, the Syrian-dominated Lebanese Government has been demanding an Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon. Now, when the Israeli Government committed to just such a unilateral withdrawal by next July, Beirut and Damascus threaten war. "An Israeli unilateral withdrawal [from south Lebanon] will not work. It will lead to another war," President Emile Lahoud warned, echoing Hafiz al-Assad's position. Why? The Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon will remove the primary Syrian point of pressure on Israel to accept the extremely disadvantageous "package deal" advocated by the Clinton Administration.